

## **ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to a novel family of beta sub-unit proteins from a voltage-gated sodium channel, and particularly the human and the rat beta sub-units which have been collectively identified as  $\beta 3$ , in view of their close structural relationship.

The invention also deals with the use of the  $\beta 3$  sub-unit polypeptide or a fragment thereof as well as of the nucleic acids encoding same for therapeutic, diagnostic and screening purposes.